

Field Naturalists' Club of Ballarat Inc

May 1998

↑
LH shells?

Or picture back to front?

From "The Encyclopedia of Seashells"

By Gary Rosenberg.

It was back to the beach,
Thanks to Peter Fry! See p6.

Meetings are held at the Ballarat Horticulture centre, corner of Gregory and Gillies Streets, ie. the NW corner of the Botanic Gardens, commencing at 7-30pm

President: Mrs Claire Dalman.....

Treasurer: Mr John Gregurke.....

Secretary: Mrs Pat Murphy.....

Editor: Mr Brian Andrews.....

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DIARY DATES

1st to 31st May. Photographic Exhibition. *Night Skies - The Art of Deep Space.* David Malin, A.A.U., Ballarat Fine Art Gallery.

1st May. Meeting. *Cinnamom Fungus - is it declining?*

Speaker Dr Gretna Weste, former Reader in Botany, University of Melbourne.

Sat 2nd May. Excursion. *Lal Lal & Mt Doran Forests.*

Leader Lyndsay Fink. Depart Creswick Plaza, 9-30.

Fri 15th May. Excursion. *Wombat Forest, Barkstead area.*

Leader Brian Gavan, club member. Depart Creswick Plaza, 9-30.

Wed 27th May. Committee Meeting. Mrs Carol Hall's, , 7-30

5th June. Meeting.

Photographing Raptors and other birds. Speaker David Whelan, photographer and Naturalist.

7th June. Excursion. *Wombat Forest - old rail line walking track.* Leaders Pat and Bill Murphy, club members.

Fri 19th June. Excursion. *Alan Sonsee's garden.* Leader Chantelle James.

FIELD REPORTS

Hobby, with captured bird - caused a great commotion! Carol Hall.

White Throated Tree Creeper, roosting in front porch, Delphine McDonald.

Red Necked Phalarope, Wood and Terek Sandpipers also a pair of Hobbies, Werribee. Ken Hammond.

Kitty's Lead Rd, Durham Lead, area much disturbed from mining activity but worthy of roadside vegetation sign. Claire Dalman.

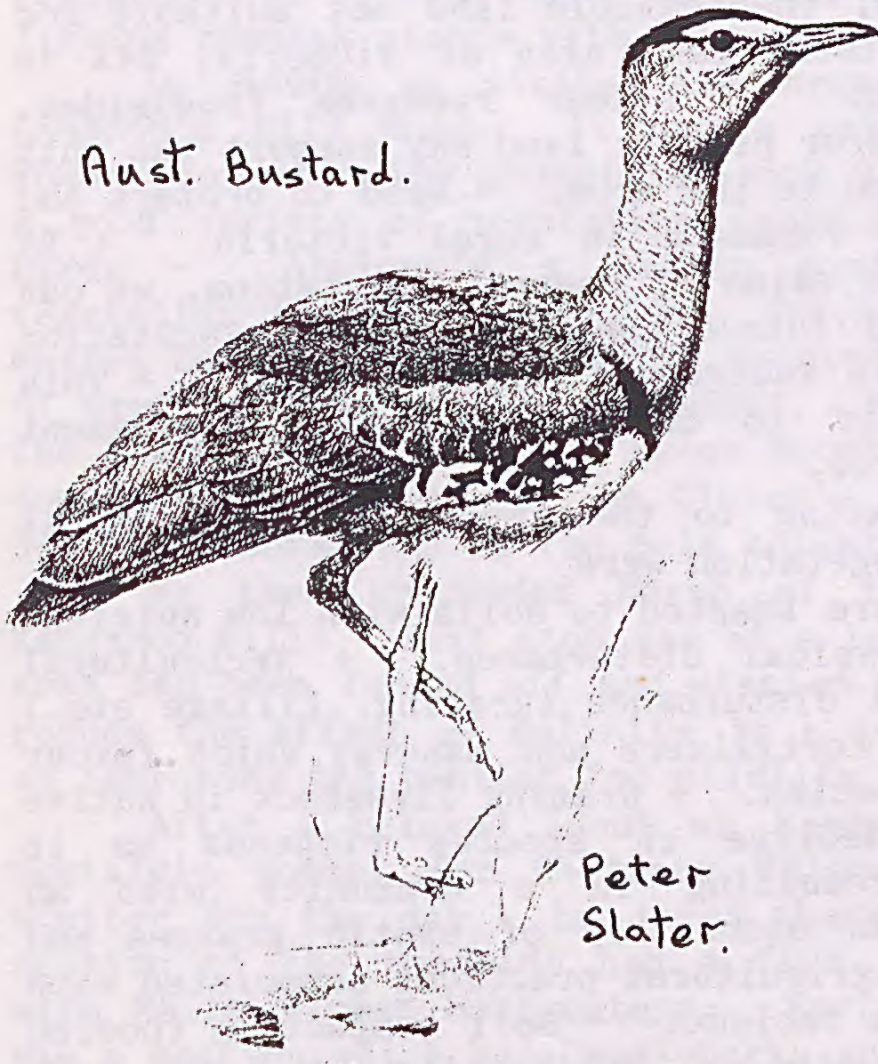
Female Little Striped Wolf Spider, *Lycosa furcillata*, carrying about 20 young, Grenville. Several fine specimens of Garden Wolf Spiders, *Lycosa godeffroyi*, coming into house, Durham Lead. Red-and-Black spider, *Nicodamus bicolour*, also at Durham Lead. Brian Andrews.

Group of 24 Little Ravens circling house, Pleasant Street Sth. Greg Binns.

Old Lady Moth and nest of Social Mud Dauber Wasp, bought in by Helen Burgess.

DON'T SHOOT THE BUSTARDS!

Aust. Bustard.



Peter
Slater.

The closed duck season commenced July 7th and extends to the 20th December, during which time the following game are protected :- wild ducks of any species, teal, bittern, emu, native companion, wild turkey or bustard, black swan, wild goose, bronze winged and other wild pigeons and mallee hen.

For all species of quail the closed season is from 1st August to 31st January, for hares from the 1st September to February 28th.

Report from Avoca Mail 1875.

Supplied by GWB.

CONSERVATION VALUE OF REMNANT VEGETATION,
IN THE BLAMPIED - KOOROOCHANG LANDCARE GROUP AREA.

Chantelle James was our speaker for the April meeting. She gave details of work on the above topic, which she had done as part of her university study.

Her research aims included:- # Increasing the awareness in the Landcare Group of the amount of native vegetation lost since settlement and the continued decline. # To inform of the current and future quality and condition of the remaining vegetation in the Landcare area, and the significance of its conservation value and the need for conservation. # Development of strategies to enhance conservation in the area.

She started by pointing out the following facts:- * The cover of forest and dense woodland in Victoria has been reduced from 75% to 33% since settlement. * Remnant vegetation has become fragmented and isolated, restricting the movement of both flora and fauna in rural Victoria. * Without tree and vegetation removal, the loss of indigenous vegetation will still increase as a result of dieback and old age. * 5 million trees die annually in agricultural Victoria. * Over 33% of Victoria is public land which supports native vegetation in natural or semi-natural condition. * Majority of this land is located on non-productive, inaccessible land not suitable for agriculture. * Of the total land area of Victoria, 64% is privately owned farmland. * Linear reserves (roadsides, railways, streamsides) and/or private land may support the only remaining native vegetation in the area. * Need to protect and enhance the condition of remnants in rural Victoria. * By assessing the conservation value of remnant vegetation, we can determine the current and future condition of the vegetation and its ability to conserve indigenous flora and fauna. * This value assessment will aid to develop strategic management objectives in the rural area.

Various points relating to the impact of agricultural activities upon remnant vegetation were raised:- + Native plants are adapted to soils with low nutrient levels and infrequent physical disturbance. + Agricultural practices involve frequent disturbance (grazing, tillage etc.) and high nutrient input (fertilisers and manure) which favour establishment of exotic species. + Grazing livestock in native vegetation leads to a decline in species richness as it prevents regeneration, resulting in a community with an overstory of trees and an understory of exotic grasses and possibly woody weeds. + Agricultural practices associated with premature dieback of trees include:- - Soil compaction (hoofed animals, heavy machinery etc). - Ringbarking of trees with palatable bark (eg messmate) - Fertiliser use and tendency of

stock to congregate under wooded areas. (Increases nutrient status of soil and trees, leading to increased insect attack).

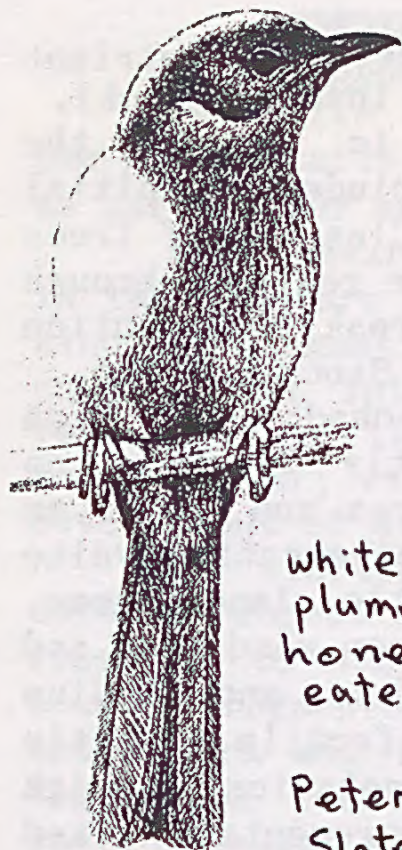
Various roadside practices also tend to lead to the replacement of natives with exotics, these include:- ~ Initial road construction. ~ Realignment of roads. ~ Clearing of trees for placement of utilities. ~ Altered moisture regimes through drainage works. ~ Rubbish dumping. ~ Firebreak construction (ploughing, slashing, fire and herbicides). ~ Stock grazing.

The following conclusions were reached:- * High conservation value vegetation predominantly occurs on sedimentary landsystems in the BK Landcare area and is of an open forest community. * Low and medium conservation value vegetation occurs predominantly upon basaltic landsystems. Communities include woodlands, open and very open woodlands and native grasslands. * Communities of low and medium conservation value that are located on the fertile basaltic landsystems are as significant as remnant vegetation of high conservation value because of their poor representation and condition in the landcare area. * The decline of trees and the condition of indigenous vegetation can be decreased by lowering disturbance levels around remnant vegetation. * Isolation and fragmentation of vegetation in rural Victoria can be reduced by linking remnant stands with corridors of indigenous vegetation.

On Sunday we visited the area, our first stop was in Langdon's Hill Road. It was a quiet lane, leading to the Wombat Forest. The underlying rock was sedimentary, there was a good variety of vegetation (mostly native), and plenty of birds - obviously a fairly good wildlife habitat. The vegetation included Swamp Gums, Prickly Current Bush, Dogwood, Narrow Leaf Bitter Pea and Pat spotted a large patch (10m x 5m) of Creeping Grevillea (*G. repens*). We then made our way, via the Wombat Forest, to the Swiss Mountain Hotel - where Kevin topped up with stout and on Claire's insistence we all checked out the decorations in the male toilet!

We then proceeded North of the highway, viewing the Kangaroo Hills. Next stop was at a local farm where a recharge area had been fenced off and planted with trees - hopefully to reduce the effect of salinity in a nearby depression, as well as improving the habitat for wildlife.

After a relaxed lunch we headed for Wilson's Road - a nostalgic moment for Geoffrey Wilson who was with us as a visitor for the day - he lived there in years gone by! One section of the roadside had a fine stand of Redgums - along with White Plumed Honeyeaters. Further along the road there was a section which had Candlebarks and Silver Banksias. On



white
plumed
honey-
eater.

Peter
Slater.

the Western side of the Southern end there was a paddock that had not been grazed recently - it was covered in Kangaroo Grass!

Our final stop was at a property in White Hills Road, there were magnificent ancient Candlebarks. Areas had been fenced off to allow regeneration. An old Black She-oak and several Silver Banksias were also present - Joan Martin pointed out that there were several flowers coming out of the Banksia's trunks as well as from the branches. In one section which had been fenced off, tree growth slowed right down, until the fence was removed - maybe some manure was beneficial!

Chantelle did such a fine job with her research, talk and excursion that it didn't come as too much of a shock when it was revealed that her grandmother's brother was Alan Sonsee!

BDA

MAMMALS OF BALLARAT...No28... THE FOX

FOX *Vulpes vulpes*

ORDER CARNIVORA, Family Canidae

The European Red Fox was deliberately introduced into Australia in the 1860s. First released near Melbourne for sporting purposes, its subsequent spread was remarkable; by 1893 it had become a nuisance in N.E. Victoria and by 1987 it had reached the region west of Kalgoorlie, WA.

Next to the dingo and feral dogs the fox is the largest terrestrial predator on the mainland of Australia, but it is absent from tropical Australia and Tasmania.

It is an opportunistic feeder - small mammals, fruit and insects are in its diet. It is a serious predator on native fauna and livestock. In dense forest or scrub it relies heavily on native fauna.

Usually nocturnal, it lays up in hollow logs and dens by day. In winter when food is scarce it may hunt by day. A territory size is about 2-5km² for a family group.

Over a period of 2-3 weeks in early winter to early spring, females come into oestrus for 2-3 days. Both sexes reach maturity in their first year. The average litter is 4 or more, born in the den. They first appear in late spring, dispersal takes place in late summer.

Population turnover appears to be high, mange and

distemper are probably important diseases. Should rabies come to Australia it would be a major catastrophe.

Foxes are not wanted in Australia, their cost to our fauna is far too great.

Their status is abundant, there are no subspecies in Australia.

In Ballarat they even live in the city area!

Elfin

MOLLY DOOKER SHELLS!...BACK TO THE BEACH!

I thought that I had settled the question of handedness in shells, which was part of the March Poser. Every conical shell that I could find was right handed. Then came the letter:-

Further to the note in last F.Nat. re LH whorl shells. *Marine Molluscs of Victoria* by JH Macpherson & CJ Gabriel, printed by Melb University Press in association with National Museum of Victoria, Page 58, has a note "*Calliostoma inserta* shell creamy white, occasionally pink tinted, small conically sinistral whorls obliquely convex obliquely angled at base. Located at San Remo Western Port off Wilsons Prom.

Authors original description

Probably dextral (right hand whorl) - Not So -, definitely sinistral (left hand whorl).

Beyond Victoria the shell occurs in waters off South Australia & Tasmania."

I hope this is of enlightenment to Members.

It occurs in waters over 8 metres deep.

Peter L Fry

Congratulations Peter! You are obviously "on the ball" and a fine naturalist! No wonder the club awarded you Life Membership! Also it is pleasing to see you are getting stuck into the Posers!

Editor

Goaded into action by Peter's letter I checked out more references:-

Gary Rosenberg, *The Encyclopedia of Seashells*, described the following LH shells:-

Guam Triphora - *Mastonia guamensis*, *Pyramidella acus*, Retrovert Pteropod - *Limacina retroversa* (Nth Atlantic), +6 related species and Reticulate Pteropod - *Peracle reticulata* (worldwide) - and I would now say, there are no doubt others!

Also Chris Pellant, *The Pocket Guide to Fossils*, shows Turrilites were left handed, but they were ammonites which are usually bilaterally symmetrical, rather than asymmetric like most of the gastropods.

BDA

APRIL POSER

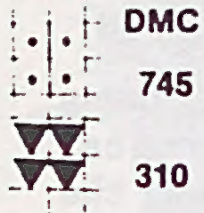
Peter Dalman found a Nautilus in the grey squares at 7-56pm. I won't say anything about husbands not listening to their wives!

BDA

MAY POSER

Can you cross stitch the Red-eyed tree frog!

COLOUR KEY



DMC

DFT

745

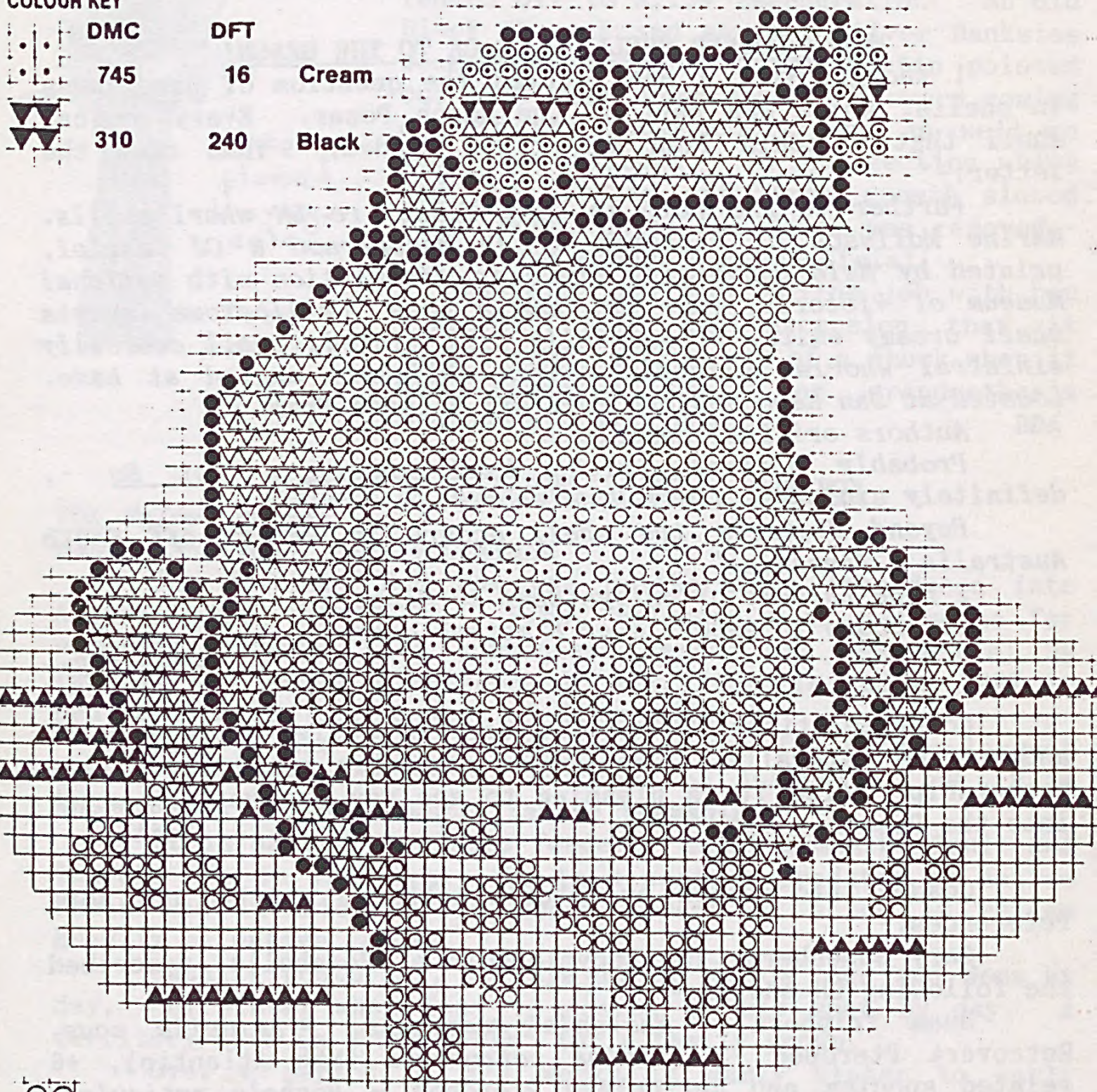
16

Cream

310

240

Black



922

93

Light orange

946

504

Bright orange

703

101

Bright green

909

8

Blue green

726

31

Yellow

BDA

946

147

Deep green